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How to Make Over Old Dresses.

BY

AUGUSTA PRESCOTT.

CONTAINS

Full Directions for Dyeing and Washing Dress Goods, and Re-making in the Latest Styles.

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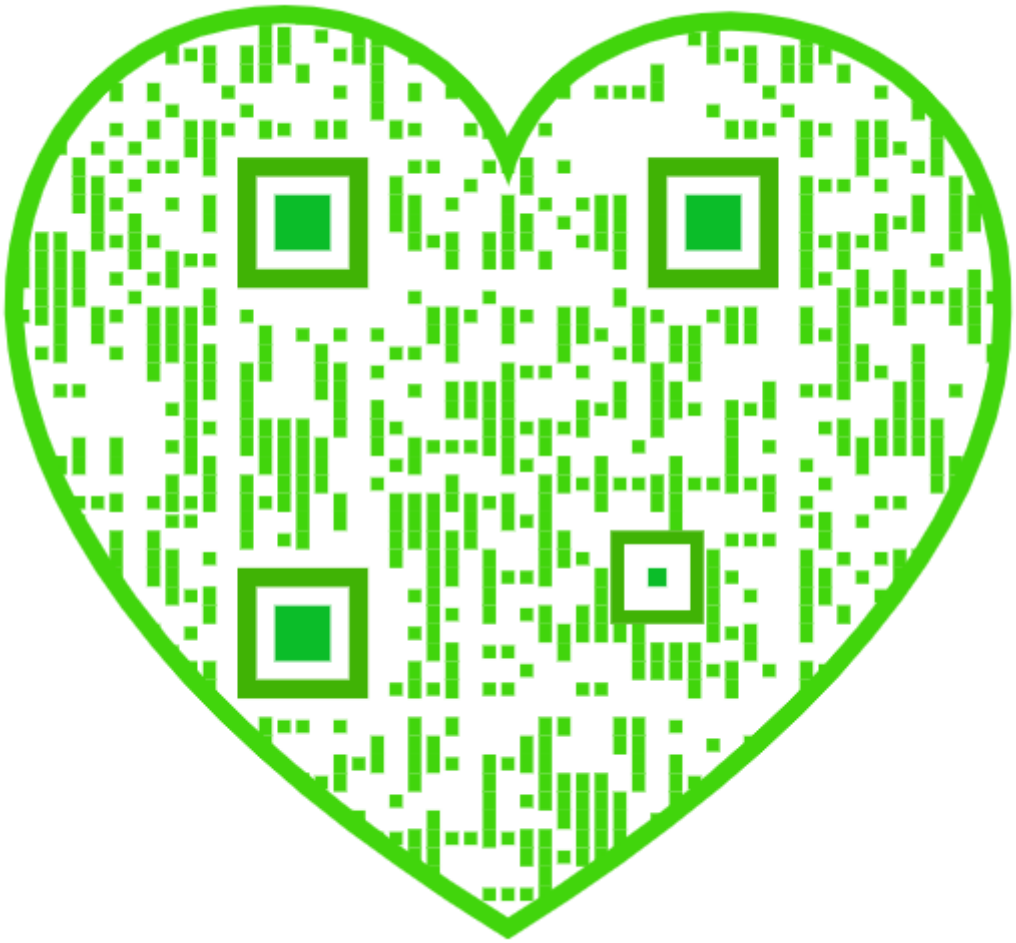

How to Make Over

OLD DRESSES.

BY

AUGUSTA PRESCOTT,

Woman Editor "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.
Formerly Woman Editor of the "World," New York.

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A Suggestion 4

A SUGGESTION.

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The Home Book Company.

Box 3629, New York.

Chapter I.

TO BEGIN WITH.

It is not the most cheerful thing in the world to look over a wardrobe full of old dresses, and to decide how they can be made over so as to do duty for another season.

There are those that are so torn and worn that it seems impossible to do anything with them. There are others so soiled that they must be, either cleaned or dyed, and still others that seem hopeless cases, because they are so cut up into ruffles and trimmings, that to make them over in anything like the present style is discouraging from the very thought of the managing and the piecing that must be done.

Yet one must take hold of the matter boldly and look the situation right in the face. And the capable home mother does not allow herself to be daunted, even though her stock in trade is very limited. It may be taken, as a rule, that each one of the family requires a new dress at the beginning of each season.

Grown up Susie is beginning to go out a little in company, and she wants to make as good an appearance as possible. Kitty wears long dresses

now, and last summer's gown, which was above her shoe-tops, must be made over this year. Then there are the other girls, all the way down to the little five-year-old, who needs something new. And to supply all these growing demands is the care and the duty of the mother of the family.

The first rule that can be laid down is to regard all things as possible. Each old gown, however soiled or ragged, has certain possibilities connected with it. And with any stock at all, no woman need feel that it is going to be out of the question to dress her family comfortably and nicely, for another season, without buying anything new.

Gather then together all the old gowns, and, reading the following pages carefully, decide what can be done with them.

Chapter II.

RIPPING.

The first thing to be done is to rip up the old dresses. This is, probably, the most unpleasant part of all the work. The material is dusty, of course, and the folds are full of dirt. There are tears and cuts in the folds that make ripping difficult, and yet all must be done as carefully as though one were handling new and dainty goods.

Take one dress at a time. Never try to do more than this, unless there is a large home force at work. It is difficult enough to reconstruct one old dress into prettiness, without having the confusion of other materials around.

Select the dress that seems best worthy of attention, and go to work upon it.

Rip the waist first, because it is most important that this should be carefully done; and, if one leaves it to the last, there is danger of getting out of patience and slighting it. The best thing for ripping is a very sharp knife. Have the knife ground to a very fine edge, and then, pinning one side of the goods to the knee, hold the other firmly apart, and cut each stitch as

carefully as though you were just sewing the dress instead of ripping it.

Around the armholes, the neck, and the underarm seams, be particularly careful that you do not stretch the goods, as when this is done all hope of ever using the goods again is destroyed. It is tedious work, this slow ripping, but it is work that well repays the one that does it carefully. Stitch by stitch the sharp cutting should go on, with never a jerk and never a tear to fret the goods, or pull it out of shape, or otherwise injure it.

Many people profess themselves unable to do this with a knife, as they say that the pressure of the blade upon the stitch calls for such a vigorous jerk of the cloth, that the texture is injured. And they, on this account, prefer a good, sharp pair of pointed scissors.

However this may be, do the work slowly and conscientiously, and when the pieces are all separated take out the stitches carefully and lay the goods in a pile before you, ready for the next step.

It is poor economy of time or labor to undertake to leave together any part of a badly soiled dress, or a dress that is to be entirely remodelled. The new sewing is sure to show, and when the dress is done there will be a sad contrast be-

tween the old, half-worn seams, and those that are newly made.

Rip the whole garment apart, and then, when all is done, get ready for the next step, which must be partly determined upon by yourself.

In some cases the goods are so badly soiled that nothing can remove the spots. They have affected the material, and stained the fibre, so that nothing will take them out, and in this case there is nothing to be done but to dye the goods; and it occasionally happens that even when goods are not soiled at all the owner prefers to have them dyed, because she has become tired of the old color.

The dyeing is never as desirable as the simple washing of the goods, because dye-stuffs are bound, from their very nature, to injure the cloth more or less; and, moreover, in the hands of the home worker the dyed garment is apt to look "streaky," and is pretty sure to lose some of its beauty in going through the coloring process.

In the majority of cases, simply washing the goods is all that is necessary after the removal of such spots as can be taken out by careful manipulation.

Chapter III.

WASHING GOODS.

It is really surprising how satisfactory it is to wash colored materials if the washing is done properly. Very often such goods will come out of the tub as bright and pretty as they were when new, and their appearance is a surprise and a delight to her who has somewhat doubtfully undertaken the task.

Of course the work must be done intelligently or the result will be a disagreeable bungle, and it must be done according to some rule or the result will not be that which is hoped for.

There are those housewives who permit the element of luck to enter into all their household tasks. It is a common thing to hear the expression, "I had bad luck with my bread this week." "I had no luck at all with the cake to-day."

Now it is the same with washing goods. Frequently a woman will wash some material and have it turn out well, while the next time she tries it the result will be very unsatisfactory. The reason is found in the fact that she had no particular rule with the work at either time, and that the first time she tried it she was lucky

enough to do it right. The second time she was unlucky, and did not hit upon the right conditions, therefore the result was bad.

By having regular rules and set directions this element of luck can be entirely removed, and one need run no risk of spoiling things by haphazard work.

There are a few cheap colored prints that will not wash, but these are the exception. Many very common goods wash perfectly, and delicate goods, if properly treated, are almost sure to go through the soap-and-water process and come out just as good as they were originally.

Even in cases where goods do not "wash," properly speaking, they may yet be treated in such a way that they will fade evenly, and thus, while the color of the material is altered, it is altered so nicely that one does not suspect that the goods have faded. The color is different—that is all.

Different materials require different kind of treatment. Silks, merinos, woollen goods, and flannel, all require a slightly different method of washing in order to come out in the best possible way. The best general rule for washing colored dresses is this one :

Take a quantity of soft water and put enough soap into it to make a thick, strong lather. Add

a tablespoonful of ox-gall. Now put in the goods and wash it well—principally by squeezing with the hands. Vigorous rubbing draws the pieces out of shape, and it is better to stir them round in the water, giving the suds a chance to run through and take out the dirt.

Before beginning operations, prepare a large panful of very weak starch slightly tinged with bluing; mix a small quantity of gum-arabic water, perhaps a tablespoonful, with the starch. As soon as the dress is taken from the tub run it rapidly through the starch water, squeeze well, open it and hang it up quickly to dry in the shade.

The whole operation should be done as rapidly as possible. If the goods are allowed to remain for a long time in the water, if they are a long while in getting out of the starch, or if they are permitted to dry slowly, they are almost sure to be streaked and to show the effect of clumsy washing. The quicker it is done the better.

As soon as the material is dry, iron it without sprinkling. The ironing should be done with as cool an iron as will serve to take out the creases, and care should be taken to iron all the different pieces upon the same side of the goods, if there is a difference in the two sides. Pressure of the iron is sure to alter the appearance of the ma-

terial, often leaving a shine, and in all cases leaving it flatter and smoother than on the other side.

Ironing over a paper or a damp flannel is not as satisfactory, because the goods seldom become as smooth in this way. Great care should be taken not to pull the cloth in the ironing or to permit the point of the iron to make the goods "bulge" in any particular place. The best pressing irons are round-pointed ones, but very few women possess these, and with the lack of them, one can only exercise unusual precautions.

Washing flannel, lady's cloth, cheviot, etc., is an art in itself, and in these days when many of the prettiest dresses are of this material, it is important to know how to wash them without shrinking or making the goods hard.

According to the best experience, flannel should be washed in water just as hot as the hand will bear. In each gallon of the hot water there should be put a tablespoonful of the strongest ammonia, and also enough soap-suds to make a good lather. White soap is best for washing flannels, although any good pure soap will do. The flannel is then put in the water, and is quickly squeezed out again. It is put in another water and squeezed out again, and in another and squeezed yet again. Each water

must be entirely clean and prepared in the way described.

This is really a great deal of trouble, but with a nice dress it is worth the extra work, because it so well repays the care taken. The fourth water into which the flannel is put should be clear and without ammonia, and after the flannel is well squeezed out of this water it should be hung quickly in the air to dry. If the weather is cool enough to freeze the flannel do not be alarmed, because freezing does not particularly hurt this material.

Colored flannel will sometimes fade when treated with ammonia, and it is well to try a small piece of it in the water before venturing all. In case it is found to fade, take clear water and put into it a mixture made by stirring two tablespoonfuls of flour into a quart of cold water. Let it boil. Soap-suds are then added, and the flannel is washed as previously described.

Never rinse flannel in cold rinsing water, as it is sure to harden the material.

When the flannel is drying, shake, stretch, and turn it several times. It should dry very slowly.

In washing silk, it is well to mix strained honey with soft soap in the proportion of six ounces of the honey to four ounces of soap. Add this to a pint of alcohol. The dress should be

entirely taken apart, as previously described, and then each piece must be spread flat on a table and covered with the honey mixture, first on one side and then on the other. A clothes-brush may be used for this, but the silk should be brushed very little and always straight up and down the silk. The silk should then be dipped into three different tepid waters and taken out without wringing. In the last water a little honey should be mixed. The silk should then be hung up to dry and ironed on the wrong side with a cool iron. It is important to wait until the silk is half dry or it will be stiff. In washing black silk the mixture should have enough boiling water added to it to make it warm. Spread out the silk on the table, and dipping a sponge in the water rub the material on both sides. Squeeze it well. Add more hot water to the cold so as to make it hot again. Rinse the silk in clean cold water and keep repeating the operation until the last water is perfectly clear after the silk is taken out.

To make it appear like new silk, dissolve a little glue in boiling water and mix it with enough cold water to be comfortable to the hand, and sponge the dress with it. When ironing be careful that the iron is not too hot.

A black woolen dress may be washed by put-

ting it in a big panful of cool soft water. Let it lie all night, and in the morning rinse it out, shaking it up and down in clean water. Hang it up, and when it is merely damp iron it. Do not dampen it, as it is apt to spot it. This applies only to black dresses, not colored, as colored dresses are sure to turn out badly if left wet.

In following these directions it is well to experiment with a small piece of the goods.

It will frequently happen that there is some substance in the make-up of the material that is unknown to the buyer and to the one who gives directions for washing the goods. And it will make such a difference in the result that the appearance will be entirely unsatisfactory. It is on this account that no exact rule can be laid down ; but with the aid of the foregoing simple directions a clever housewife can make rules for herself, if she finds that those which have been laid down are not sufficiently accurate to meet her demands.

Chapter IV.

TAKING OUT SPOTS.

One of the most difficult things in renovating a dress is to remove the spots and stains without leaving a place to show that such work has been done.

Very often the spot that has been cleaned will be so much brighter and newer of appearance than the rest of the goods, that it puts the old material to shame, so to speak, and thus the whole has to be renovated.

In other cases where the stains are deep, the acids required to remove them are so powerful that they ruin the material of the goods and cause it to tear before its time.

It is better, if possible, to throw away every badly spotted piece of goods on this account ; but where the stain is a slight one, or where it extends over a large portion of the goods, it may be successfully removed if the work is done intelligently and carefully.

To remove tar from cloth a liberal application of turpentine is often effective. Turpentine will sometimes also remove paint.

Tea stains and mildew may be taken out by mixing two tablespoonfuls of chloride of lime in

a pail of warm water. The goods should be soaked in the solution for half an hour and then thoroughly rinsed in water and dried.

Iron rust is a difficult thing to remove, and yet if the stains are covered with salt and then thoroughly saturated with lime or lemon juice and afterward placed in hot water, the rust will often come out. This can only be done with white goods, as colored goods would fade in the process.

Turpentine, or a mixture of equal parts of ammonia and turpentine, will take out machine oil, provided the goods can stand the ammonia. As previously recommended it is well to experiment with a small piece of the goods before applying anything well known as an acid.

In using turpentine or any inflammable substance, great care should be taken not to allow it to ignite. If the air becomes filled with the odor of the turpentine do not illumine the room until the turpentine has been allowed to escape through an open window.

To take out grease-spots from silk, a mixture of two ounces of spirits of wine, one ounce of French chalk, and five ounces of pipe-clay rolled into a paste will often prove effective. This is really what is sold in the stores in sticks for removing grease-spots from silk.

When the mixture has hardened slightly, moisten it and rub it on the grease-spot and then brush it off. If the grease has not been absorbed, try again and brush off again.

Stains caused by acid are the most difficult of all to remove. Fruit stains, such as lemon stains, strawberry stains, and—most difficult of all—peach stains, may be removed by wetting the stained part and covering it with salt of wormwood. It should then be rubbed well without adding any more water.

If salt of wormwood is not obtainable, another method of removing the stain is to dampen the spot slightly and hold over a lighted match at a safe distance, so as not to burn the goods.

Still another way is to tie up in the stained parts some barley ash, and then making a soft lather of soap boil the linen in it, if the goods be white, until the stains disappear. With colored goods soap may be rubbed on the outside and water poured through the spot.

The clever housewife must decide for herself which is the best to be used in each individual case, and she should also carefully note whether the goods which she is using are all silk texture, or half wool, or cotton and wool, as the quality makes a great difference.

Chapter V.

DYEING.

Dyeing goods is a simple thing in the city, where one can send out to a store and get five or ten cents' worth of good standard dye.

In the country it is not so simple a thing, because there is more or less delay in sending for the dye-stuff, and then one is not perfectly sure of the shade which has been obtained.

Whenever possible, get a circular containing all the different colors which are sold for coloring dress goods to any desired shade, and then when the selection has been made, send for the color, and use it exactly according to the printed directions which come with it.

Any of the well-advertised standard dyes may be regarded as reliable, and it is really worth while for the home dressmaker who wants to achieve good results to wait until she can send to a good, reliable dealer before beginning her work.

In dyeing goods the same direction that was given in washing may hold good. Do not allow the material to remain long wet. It is sure to be streaked and come out badly. Put the goods in

the dye, piece by piece, and squeeze them (without wringing). Just as soon as they are taken out, shake each piece, giving it a quick snap, and then instead of hanging over a line fasten it to the line by clean clothes-pins, or, better still, pin it up to another piece of goods.

Before anything is put in the dye be sure that there is no sediment, and that the color is clear, to the bottom of the caldron.

A copper kettle will not do for a dye kettle. An iron pot of large size and perfectly clean should be used for the purpose, and might be kept from year to year as the dye kettle of the family.

Among home-made dyes that are perfectly reliable may be mentioned the old dye which was used by our grandmothers—the beautiful yellow golden-rod.

To obtain this, gather golden-rod when it is perfectly ripe and is at its deepest yellow. Fill a kettle nearly full of the flowers and then cover with water. Let it boil, and in about an hour strain out the golden-rod flowers, leaving the deep yellow dye-stuff.

Light gray, pale lavender, a very delicate shade of blue, a few shades of light green and pale pink materials will take this dye nicely, although none are as successful in it as white and gray. The

goods should be boiled in the golden-rod dye, and then squeezed out and carefully hung up to dry.

Another color is found in the common family bluing. To obtain a deep beautiful navy blue make a strong solution of indigo water. Then dip the goods in it as if for a regular family wash. By following the regular washing directions carefully there should be no danger of having the goods streaked, and the result will be entirely satisfactory. Repeated dippings will deepen the color of the blue.

Very strong coffee is used to color white goods and lace to a rich yellow. The process of doing this is so well known that it need not be described. It is sufficient to say that the goods should be dipped in the coffee solution three or four times to deepen the color, and to relieve the suggestion of the dirty yellow that one sometimes notices in coffee-stained goods, and which gives one the idea of dirt rather than color.

It is hardly safe to say that any of the home-made dyes will stand the weather well. They are apt to fade in the sun, and they frequently are so unfortunate as to go back to their original colors when exposed to dampness and dew.

Rain will sometimes cause them to "run" and produce the most melancholy effect, and it is

indeed seldom that home-made dyes will stand anything but clear cold weather.

For house dresses, evening dresses that are to be carefully cared for, and dresses that are to do duty only half a dozen times, the home-made dyes answer very well, but they cannot be recommended for their wearing qualities in the long run. They lack the essentials which set the color, and it is on that account that the home dressmaker should consider very carefully before she intrusts her precious material to dyes of her own making.

Cochineal will produce red in all its various shades, according to the amount added to the water. Saffron will give all the shades of yellow, to the deep old gold. Combinations of indigo and saffron will produce green. Combinations of cochineal and indigo will give purple. But it is seldom that home talent can produce proper results with these tricky dyes. Therefore, by all means, obtain the regular "boughten" article if there is any dyeing to be done.

Chapter VI.

HOW MUCH MATERIAL.

Now that the dress is either cleaned or dyed, as may be desired, the next thing to decide is what is to be done with the material that is on hand. It is seldom a good plan to combine new material with old. The old material will wear out when the new is yet in its prime, and the dress is thus rendered worthless before it has half repaid the time and trouble expended upon it.

So, then, take what material you have on hand and put your ingenuity at work to devise the best use that can be made of it.

It is not possible to lay down any strict rules for making a dress unless one knows how much material there is in the house that can be used.

By way of a few general directions it may be stated that for a woman of medium height there is required about seventeen yards of twenty-two inch goods. This will make a dress in the present style of straight skirt, full sleeves, and rather fancy bodice.

Of course the goods in this case are not all in one piece, and one must, therefore, in looking over

the material, take notice how the different parts of the dress are to be cut. Lay aside the pieces for the uppers of the sleeves, front and back of the waist, and the skirt. The rest may be depended upon to come out of the pieces that are left.

By this calculation one can get some idea of the amount of material that is on hand. Eleven yards of twenty-seven inch goods will make a very good-sized pattern for a person of medium height, or eight yards of thirty-six inch goods. Six yards of forty-eight inch goods, or five yards of fifty-four inch goods, may be also regarded as quite sufficient.

This allows in each case an ample pattern, and the extra quantity is mentioned because the goods go to waste, so to speak, since they are not all of one piece. "Tacking" them together and measuring them regularly by the yard will perhaps give one an idea whether there is sufficient of the goods to make a dress all of the same material.

If there is not enough, something else might be selected from the home stock to combine with the dress.

For the foundation skirt, if a foundation is used, or otherwise for a skirt lining, there will be required about four yards of alpaca a yard wide.

If cambric is used five yards is needed, and if there is such a thing as lining silk in the house six yards will be required.

This gives some idea of the quantity of goods —not an accurate idea by any means—but it is at least a hint.

Chapter VII.

GET A GOOD PATTERN.

Suppose you are so situated that you can send out and buy a paper pattern of a good, reliable pattern store.

This is very nice, but if you have had any experience in buying paper patterns, you have noticed that sometimes they fit imperfectly. In measuring for a paper pattern, the size of the waist, the bust measure, the length of the arm--and possibly the collar—is all that is ever taken, except in exceptionally good patterns. Frequently only the bust measure is called for. This leaves a wide latitude for misfits. The waist may be too long or too short, the sleeves too tight or too loose, the armholes may go entirely astray, and the fit of the back is sometimes so faulty that the back pieces must be cut over again.

It is better to have a good pattern of your own that you can depend upon—one that you have made yourself.

To obtain one take an old waist, the best fitting one that you have, even if it be a calico house dress. Make alterations in it until it fits perfectly, without a flaw. Now rip the waist

carefully apart, and cut a paper pattern from it, observing each little turn. Cut the pattern about a quarter of an inch larger than the dress should be, when completed, so that when the goods are cut after the pattern, there is an allowance made for a quarter of an inch seam. If a larger seam is desired it may be left, but the dressmaker should always understand perfectly how large a seam has been provided for.

There is no way of getting a good pattern that is quite equal to this.

Chapter VIII.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DRESS.

Suppose you have measured up your material, and you find you have enough goods to make a plain, pretty gown. Now the next question is to decide upon the style.

The present fashion—and it is a style that bids fair to continue for a couple of seasons, at least—is in favor of the plain skirt and the somewhat complicated bodice.

The fashionable skirt is of walking length in front, and with a very short train at the back. For a person who wears a skirt forty inches long, the back of the dress should be made forty-five inches.

With proper stiffening in the skirt this does not permit the dress to drag, but merely sets it out, giving the right kind of fulness and bustle effect.

Take the best four breadths of the material and sew them together for a back. In sloping the bottom of the skirt, make the back round, or oval, and see that it just touches the floor at the sides. No steels are used in the back of the skirt, but in place of them tie strings are placed

at intervals all the way from the top to the bottom of the skirt, and are tied back, holding the skirt in place.

With a plain back, a draped front is permissible, if there is not sufficient material to make a plain, round front, as is the fashion.

The prettiest way of making the front of the skirt is to make it perfectly plain, with the middle fold of the front breadth directly in front, and the two side breadths falling perfectly straight on each side of the front. The top of the skirt is fitted as neatly over the hips as if it were a basque, and the only gores that are found in the skirt are where the side breadths join the back.

All this requires a greater quantity of material —all of one piece—than the home dressmaker usually has on hand when she undertakes to remodel an old dress, and in place of the long, plain, pretty skirt, she must devise some draped effect, which will conceal any piecing that she may wish to do.

The old-fashioned apron front is very pretty over the plain back, but in place of lifting up the apron high on each side, as used to be the style, sew the sides of it into the side-seams, giving the effect of big side-plaits across the front of the skirt.

Another way of trimming the skirt is to put a very deep ruffle around the bottom of it. The ruffle may be of some contrasting material that may be in the house, thus saving the goods upon which one is working. With a skirt which is forty inches long a ruffle or flounce eighteen inches deep is permissible upon the front and side breadths, so that it is only really necessary to provide enough of the dress material to extend down to the ruffle, after which any material at all may be used to piece out the skirt under it.

Ruffling may be greatly pieced without showing, and almost any pieces will do for the purpose. Goods slightly stained, if judiciously turned into a flounce look very well, and a deep flounce will also come to the rescue when material is too scarce to make a plain, untrimmed effect.

The waist must have full sleeves, and for this there is a large piece required for the uppers. If the sleeves are very large and full, it is calculated that about three yards of medium width goods will be required, but it is seldom that three yards of goods can actually be spared when a dress is being made over; and, therefore, one must study carefully the chapter on sleeves.

Chapter IX.

FITTING A DRESS.

To make a dress fit perfectly is as much an art as to color a picture properly, or draw a figure in its true lines.

The dressmaker who has been trained to her work will notice defects at once, and will remedy them by a few deft touches. But the home worker, while she may see the defects just as quickly, is often in ignorance how to proceed to remedy them.

A few practical suggestions may be of assistance to those who have the difficult task of fitting a waist, and may possibly serve as a sufficient guide to make the gown appear just as it should be.

First. Be sure that the back is narrow enough across the shoulders. If it is too broad, there will be wrinkles on the shoulder seams, under the arms, and in the collar. It should be so narrow that it lies perfectly flat upon the back, without the slightest wrinkle. When tried on, before the sleeves are put in, the back will appear ridiculously narrow if it is properly cut.

But do not despair, for the sleeves, when put in, will supply the requisite breadth.

Second. To fit the bust it is almost necessary that the figure be padded to secure the firm lines which are necessary when the waist is moulded to the figure. The padding may afterward be left out, and the waist will then fit snugly. The reason that so many dresses draw across the bust is because in the fitting the home dressmaker shapes the darts as closely to the figure as possible, and then, in sewing them in, she gets them snug, when they should be merely easy.

Third. Do not make the shoulder seams too long. A woman of average height should have her shoulder seams not over four inches in length, and often a pretty effect is produced with even less.

Fourth. Be sure that the gown is narrow across the back of the waist. A looseness here is what causes the disagreeable "riding up," too often found in home-made dresses.

Fifth. Shape the sleeve to the arm, even after the pattern has been tested, until you think it is perfection. Baste the sleeve in the armhole, and then be sure that the elbow comes in the right place in the gathers that have been provided for it.

Full sleeves are the rule, and the amount of fulness varies according to individual taste. A very good puffed sleeve is made by allowing four inches of extra fulness to be gathered in, evenly and regularly, on the shoulders. When the sleeves are left perfectly straight and plain, in coat-sleeve fashion, the sleeve should be one inch larger than the armhole, in order to give proper freedom to the arm.

Sixth. Be careful that the neck is cut out sufficiently, and that the collar does not draw on the back of the neck.

Cut the back of the neck out into a curve, and then fit the collar to it. The curve in the back of the neck should be, perhaps, a quarter of an inch in depth. If this curve is not made there will be a wrinkle in the back of the waist, just below where the collar is sewed on. The expression "too long-waisted from the shoulder up," means only that the neck has not been cut out sufficiently in the back to give a smooth-setting collar.

Seventh. Shape the hips as carefully as you have shaped the bust. Do not depend upon bones or steels to hold the basque in place. It should set so smoothly that these are not necessary, although it is best to use them.

Eighth. Do not button your dress straight

down the front, in the disagreeable, old fashioned way. It was formerly the custom to cut out the fronts of the dress, along the selvage of the cloth, merely turning under a proper amount for the fold. A much better way is to curve the goods out slightly, to give a good bust shape, instead of depending upon the darts to do it all. And then also slant the goods from the waist to the bottom of the basque. By doing this the waist does not draw over the stomach, and the point of the basque will not stand out in the way so familiar to home dressmakers.

When the waist has been fitted, mould the skirt as carefully around the hips as you have moulded the waist. Take darts at the hips, if necessary, and make the material fit along the front and sides with perfect smoothness.

Chapter X.

WAISTS.

Full waists are extremely fashionable, and, in making over a dress, it is often necessary to use them, for the reason that there is not enough of the material to make a nice plain waist.

The full waist is nearly always made up over a tight-fitting lining, therefore the directions for fitting a plain waist hold good in this case. The lining should be cut to extend below the belt-line, although the full waist usually has the skirt coming up over it.

To get the desired fulness in the front of a full waist, fit the lining perfectly, and then pin the dress goods at the neck and waist-line, both front and back, allowing the right fulness, and tacking each little fold in place until it is well-nigh perfection.

When shirrings are put in they should be about an inch apart.

The front fulness may be left all in one piece, if desired, and secured to the front of the waist by hooks and eyes upon the shoulder and under-arm seams. This gives the pretty all-one-piece effect so much desired now.

Chapter XI.

TRIMMINGS.

Lace is one of the most popular trimmings of the season. And it not infrequently happens that, among the housewife's treasures, there is a quantity of old lace which may be brought out to be used when wanted.

Never mind whether the lace be black or white. Both kinds are fashionable, and it may be laid down as a rule that every kind of material is trimmed with lace.

Woollen dresses, poplin, merino, and light goods, such as batiste, challie, and foulard, all come in for as much of this kind of trimming as the wearer may care to put upon it.

Suppose there is in the house a quantity of old black or old white lace. Wash it carefully if it is white, and if it is black, sponge it with ammonia until a good color is produced, and then if the lace is more than four inches in width, gather it around the bottom of the skirt in as full a ruffle as possible.

To make it still prettier, gather it up in little festoons at intervals of six or eight inches apart, and fasten the festoons with little bunches of ribbon having many loops and ends.

If the lace is too narrow for this, edge a flounce with it and lay the flounce in very narrow side-plaits, pressing the plaits so carefully in place that they will not be apt to come out in the dampness. Sew this upon the bottom of the dress, leaving a heading about an inch deep. No other finish is required.

If it has been necessary to patch the front of the waist, a lace jabot may be used to cover the defect.

Or, if the lace is not at hand, a large cravat-bow made of the dress material may be fastened on at the neck, the bow to be large enough almost to cover the front of the waist.

Ribbon, mixed with the material of the dress, may be arranged in the form of a jabot, with loops and bows in it, and may extend all the way down to the waist-line.

It is not advisable to trim the skirt any more than is absolutely necessary, as the style is for skirts which are as plain as possible. In all cases the skirt should be narrow in front and what fulness there is should be in the back.

Old-fashioned jet ornaments are again very fashionable. A narrow band of jet passementerie may be used as a heading to a collar, and may also trim the edge of the sleeves.

Jet ornaments of almost any kind are pretty

sewed upon the tops of the sleeves in epaulette fashion, and jets are also used at the back of the waist in place of buttons.

A panel upon the skirt may be fancifully trimmed with jets if one has enough of them, or the trimming may be left off—either way will be in style.

Chapter XII.

A CHAPTER ON SLEEVES.

To fit a sleeve, pin the sleeve over the top of the armhole in what seems the right place. Extend the arm, then bend it forward. If the sleeve wrinkles across the top, it is probably not high enough over the rounding part. In this case—for of course you are fitting the pattern first—cut out another pattern, making the rounding part larger.

Or, if you have actually cut the dress material, draw up the sleeve sufficiently to make the top as round and as full as is necessary. It will have to be cut out under the arm to allow for this extra fulness on top.

If the sleeve is too loose, correct it in the outside seam until the desired snugness is secured.

Should the inside seam turn up over the arm, rip the sleeve out of the armhole, and turn it a little, so as to throw the inside seam a little lower under the arm.

The principal cause of a bad-fitting sleeve is that few dressmakers cut out the sleeve enough at the place where it fits into the bust. It should be hollowed out to fit the curve in the armhole.

Chapter XIII.

MAKING THE COLLAR.

The collar should be cut bias of the material, no matter what the material may be.

When finished, it should be of the same length as the neck of the dress, and from two to nine inches deep, according to the collar that is desired.

The nine-inch collar is the well-known Medici, but the home dressmaker should not attempt it, unless she is very proficient in her art. It must be so carefully fitted to the back of the dress that it curves outward and upward from the neck, forming a sort of hollow into which the back of the head really rests.

The straight standing collar is always in good taste, and holds its own against all rival fashions. This collar should be lined with two thicknesses of linen or stiff crinoline, and faced with silk or satin.

The neck should be bound before the collar is sewed on. The collar is then finished on the lower edge and is blind-stitched to the dress below the binding. That is the smoothest way of doing it.

It may, however, be sewed on the dress by attaching it to the neck in the regular way, and hemming down the other side of the collar to the inside of the dress. A rolling collar is cut straight of the goods, folded so that the fold makes the outside edge of the collar. The edge next to the dress is, of course, hollowed in the middle as if it were a standing collar.

It is fashionable to use plaitings of mull, India silk, and lisse instead of collars. Or a standing frill of the material of the goods doubled makes a pretty finish.

Chapter XIV.

COMBINING TWO OLD DRESSES.

When two dresses are so very badly worn out that they cannot be made over individually, they may often be combined if the colors harmonize well.

Black goes well with any color; and red also has the faculty of combining with almost anything. Navy blue looks well with white and with deep shades of yellow. Green goes excellently with gray; in short, there are comparatively few shades which will not go well together if judiciously combined.

Select the better waist of the two—supposing you have two old dresses upon which to work—and clean it and patch it until it is nearly whole. If the sleeves are worn out, put in sleeves taken from some part of the skirt, and also a new collar.

Now, taking the other old dress which is to be combined with this one, make a small Zouave jacket or Spencer waist to slip on over the mended waist, to hide defects in buttonholes and the soiled spots. Let the Spencer waist be buttoned down the front to a point just under

the bust, and then curve it away nicely under the arms and across the back, finishing the edge with a narrow braiding of black.

Take enough of the material of which the Spencer waist is made to form the front and sides of the skirt, and, for the back, use the same material as the real waist of the dress.

Put a contrasting flounce around the front and sides, and you have a dress made of two old ones, and one that is really pretty.

If you wish to do so, you can, of course, combine two dresses in the old-fashioned way by putting in sleeves of one kind in the waist of the other, and a collar to match, and an apron overskirt to match the sleeves, collar, and cuffs.

This is really only a matter of taste, but the former style will be found prettier to nearly all minds.

Chapter XV.

LETTING DOWN DRESSES.

Every girl who is in the growing-up state is familiar with the disagreeable dress skirt which has been let down at the band, and which shows plainly where the former gathers were put in and where the former band was sewed on.

A dress which is let down in this way never hangs well and never looks pretty, no matter how much trimming may be put on to hide the letting-down place.

Now, if there are growing girls in the family, and if they require lengthened skirts, try this way of letting down and see if you do not like it better.

Take enough of the material of the dress to make a strip of the required width. Sew it on to the bottom of the skirt just as neatly as possible, press the seam open, and finish the bottom of the dress as before. If neatly done the seam will never be noticed.

But, supposing you have not enough material to do this. Then try this way:

Take a band of stiff muslin or of goods of any kind, and piece down the dress at the bottom.

Then cover this muslin band with a band of something that answers for trimming. Plaid goods is excellent for this. Velvet or silk also answers the purpose nicely. Even plain cloth, if of a pretty, contrasting color, looks well, and may be repeated in the collar and cuffs.

Chapter XVI.

WORN-OUT DRESSES.

When a dress is actually worn out—too worn out to be made over, and not worth the work of combining with another dress—there are still ways of lengthening the life of the poor old worn-out gown, and of making it do duty as a second best afternoon dress.

Take the prettiest worsted you can get, whether of Saxony, Berlin wool, or Zephyr, and crochet a pretty sleeveless jacket. Finish it off at the armholes and neck with a neat little scallop, and round it to fit the waist nicely all the way around.

Supply it with buttons—the prettiest you have in the house—and put it on over the worn-out dress, to cover the bad places in the front and back. If a jacket of this kind makes the dress too warm, here is another way of hiding worn-out places:

Make as big a bow of ribbon as you can spare from the stock of ribbon you have on hand. Let the loops point upward, and the ends—of which there need be only two—be very long. Fasten the bow on the back of the dress between

the shoulders, and let the ribbon ends hang all the way down to the bottom of the dress.

For the front of the waist, make a big fichu of silk or lace or cloth. Let it be so large that it is fastened at the neck and at the shoulder seams with little fancy pins. Bring down the fichu to the belt, and finish it off with a bow or two.

This helps out a bad waist wonderfully.

Chapter XVII.

TAKING CARE OF DRESSES.

When your dress is done, treat it more carefully than if it were a new one. Its age entitles it to careful consideration.

If you have not a very large, roomy wardrobe, make a big bag for your dress out of any kind of cotton goods or old calico. Take a barrel hoop and fasten strings to it so that it can be hung up. Hang your skirt upon it, and then gather the bag over all. Do not turn the skirt wrong side out.

If the dress is white or yellow, you can prevent its discoloring by putting a cake of white wax in the bag.

A small piece of camphor gum will keep steel trimmings from becoming tarnished.

When the dress is hung up "stuff" tissue paper in the bows of ribbon to keep them outright, and be sure that all the folds hang as you wish them to hang when the dress is on.

Smooth out the sleeves each time they are worn, and be sure that you never hang the dress up by the collar or the armhole. It should be hung by a loop attached to the belt-line.

Chapter XVIII.

CLEVER WAYS OF DOING THINGS.

If you have a round waist and do not own a belt to wear with it, you can do away with the belt by sewing a pretty piece of passementerie upon your skirt-band. Button the skirt over the waist, and you are nicely dressed.

In the absence of passementerie, a ruffle of the dress goods may be put around the skirt-band, to serve in place of a belt.

If your buttons do not all match each other, and you haven't a full set of any one kind, sew on a tiny ruffle of lace down the front of your dress, covering the buttons and buttonholes.

Very serviceable dress shields may be made by using a very light, thin quality of gossamer—part of an old waterproof will do nicely.

You can make a very good substitute for ribbon by doubling silk and stitching it along each edge.

Loops of thread, strengthened by twisting, will often take the place of "eyes," if there are no eyes in the house.

Thread your needle before breaking off the

thread. Your thread will never knot if you do this.

It is a good thing to make two waists to each dress, if there is material enough. One waist may be cut a little low in the neck for dress-up occasions, and the other may be a street waist.

An "adjustable" gown may be made by sewing strips of elastic underneath the front of what is known as a full waist. The elastic will hold the fronts snugly in place, and yet will stretch when required to do so.

Chapter XIX.

HINTS AND HELPS.

If you are apt to prick the forefinger of the left hand when sewing, wear a rubber nipple upon it to keep it from becoming scarred.

Buttons with only two holes in them set better upon a garment than those with more.

In sewing on buttons, put a pin between the button and the goods. This allows sufficient space for the goods to be buttoned over afterward.

In gathering, use a single coarse thread rather than a double fine one.

Keep cloves in your bureau drawers and dress boxes, to keep away moths. The cloves will also give an agreeable odor to the garments, and will keep away mustiness.

When a garment begins to wear thin, put a piece of the material underneath the thin spot, and then run it on without letting the thread go through the goods. Darn it closely to the goods at intervals of half an inch.

Have a long, narrow ironing-board for slipping in the sleeves of dresses when it is desirable to press them.

Chapter XX.

WHEN THE DRESS IS DONE.

When you have completed your dress, it may not be perfect in every respect, but if you have been careful, it will surely be very nice, and something of which you may be very proud, because it represents much care and thought.

Finish it well to the last loop, and sew in the dress shields. Take out the basting threads, be sure that the seams are finished, and that it is all in "apple-pie order."

Don't point out to people any defects that may exist.

Do not lift up the overskirt to show that the underskirt is pieced down with goods of a different kind.

Do not show that the under-arm pieces are faded.

Do not tell anybody that the full front covers buttonholes that are torn out.

Do not say that the beautiful bias band around the bottom of the skirt hides a ghastly muslin gap.

Do not tell anybody that the dress was originally bought before Jamie died, and that it has

been laid away three years while you were in mourning.

Don't let the good-man of the family—who always takes your word for such things—believe that the dress is a poor, miserable makeshift, but tell him that it is a beauty, the best one you ever made, and the prettiest one he could find, if he were to look over all the congregation next Sunday at church.

Put on the dress as carefully as though it were the costliest silk or satin. Fasten your prettiest pin at the neck. Bestow upon yourself all the loving little taps and pats which give the finishing touches to a woman's toilet. And then wear your dress proudly, feeling that you have achieved a triumph, in that you have made something out of nothing.

THE END

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